

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, January 19, 1901, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Volta Bureau, Washington, D. C. January 19, 1901. My darling Mabel:

I am lost here without you now. A brilliant beam crossed my path for a moment — and now is gone. I love you my dear for all your thoughtfulness and care. Everything here breathes of you — and I could not bear to consign your picture to the cellar as you proposed. So I have deposed Prof. Henry and placed you where I can look upon you every day. Glad to receive your note from the steamer. Hope you received my telegram wishing you Bon voyage. When the Board of Regents adjourned it was too late then to telegraph you my success. The amended resolution was adopted unanimously; and it will now be presented to Congress as a Memorial from the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution — and be referred to a Committee for investigation. The question now is — “What shall I do next?” I have communicated with Mr. True of the Committee representing the Land Grant Colleges of the United States; and with Prof. Nicholas Murray Butler, and President Harper of the Chicago University representing the Committee of the National Educational Association; and also with President Gilman, President Dabney, Mr. Walcott and others — giving them copies of the Resolution and requesting suggestions.

Inclined to think the first thing should be to call a meeting of these persons and settle upon a common place. Let the National University go — for the present ! Let us agree 2 to ask only for a Bureau of Research and a man to direct it. The appropriation for such a purpose need not exceed \$10,000. I doubt whether Congress will support anything further than this. The Educational features will come later on through private endowments. These endowments will certainly be obtained if we can secure a Government Bureau of Research as a nucleus.

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When we have agreed upon a plan — then the next thing will be to show that there is a demand for the proposed Bureau of Research — that persons all over the country are clamoring for admittance to the Departments of the Government and etc. Pressure must be put upon members of Congress by their constituents in all parts of the United States — asking for the passage of a Bill. Let the Committee of the Land Grant Colleges — stir them up to write to their representatives. Let the Committee of the N. E. A. and associated Colleges — stir up the schools and colleges to exert pressure on their constituents. Let the Washington Academy of Sciences stir the other scientific bodies of the country — and the George Washington Memorial Association stir up their local associations to action. In a word — our efforts should be to stir up outside bodies — to stir up Congress. We can only do this profitably — through others. Members must be convinced that the country demands what we want.

Your loving husband, Alec.